

APPROVED-May 26, 2011

There was a regular meeting of the Cumberland School Committee on Thursday, May 12, 2011 at the Cumberland High School Auditorium, 2600 Mendon Road, Cumberland, Rhode Island.

Members Present: Jeff Mutter, Erika Sanzi, Lisa Beaulieu, Dan Pedro, Linda Teel, Earl Wood, John Gibbons

Administration Present: Donna A. Morelle, Ed.D., Superintendent, Joseph A. Rotella, Director of Administration, Dr. Susan Carney, Assistant Superintendent, Alex Prignano, Business Manager

Agenda Item #1: Chairman Convenes Meeting

Chairman Mutter convened the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda

Mr. Wood made a motion to approve the agenda, 2nd Mr. Pedro, approved 7-0.

Agenda Item #4: Consent Agenda

Approval of minutes for regular meeting of 4/28/11 and executive session of 4/28/11. Mr. Gibbons made a motion to approve the minutes for the regular meeting of 4/28/11 and the executive session

of 4/28/11, 2nd Mrs. Beaulieu, approved 7-0.

Agenda Item #5: Student Government Report

Sofia Dias and Jessica Kszystyniak presented the Student Government Events. Class elections will be held on May 19th during the informational period – open positions are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Junior prom will be held on May 20th at the Rhodes on the Pawtuxet from 6:00 to 11:00 p.m. Staff appreciation week is from May 23-27 – CHS faculty and staff will enjoy banana splits, raffles, breakfast and a cookout! Senior reception is on June 3rd at the Crowne Plaza from 6:00 to 11:30 p.m. – this event is free to all current seniors due to Cumberland's win in the contest that was sponsored by the Crowne Plaza last year. Senior week is June 6-10, seniors will enjoy a variety of events – including a cookout, yearbook signing and dress up days. Seniors will also be attending a PawSox game on May 31st. Grad nite was April 28th thru May 1st – a group of 100 seniors enjoyed a trip to Florida.

Agenda Item # 6: Chairperson's Report

There is no report at this time.

Agenda Item #7: Student Achievement

A. Student Recognition – Lizabeth Cante – Grade 11 – CHS – was the 2nd runner up in the Lindsay Anne Burke Memorial Fund 4th Annual Teen Dating Violence Awareness Prevention Poster Contest. She was presented a certificate from the SC and Mrs. Burke presented her

with a check for \$200 and framed copies of her poster. Mrs. Burke also thanked Betsey MacDonald (CHS Art Teacher) for all of her help. Mrs. Burke noted that one out of five teens are in a bad relationship – she urged all parents to TALK to their teens!

B. Superintendent's Report on Teaching and Learning – Dr. Morelle noted that Commissioner Gist announced that four of every five Rhode Island public schools met all of the 2010 -11 targets in the federal No Child Left Behind Act. This was released on May 6, 2011. All of our schools met their goals except for CHS – they met all except for two targets. Ashton and B.F. Norton met all of their targets and are no longer under intervention status. Dr. Morelle also thanked the SC for the professional development initiatives throughout the year – continued progress and she thanked all of the Cumberland teachers!

Agenda Item #8: Comments from the Public

Paula M. – Principal at B.F. Norton – commented that teachers and administrators should be celebrating because they met AYP – also mentioned that various programs are helping the students and it is reflected in their test scores. Mrs. Maloney thanked the teachers and said we need to do everything we can to support these teachers – the Cumberland Public Schools are not broken, they are supported by wonderful teachers, great families, etc. She also spoke about the BVP lease, talked about the preschool possibly going back to the church that it originally came from – how much stress this situation was causing – that the BVP lease will help BVP not the Cumberland

Public Schools – it will make Cumberland responsible for some Pawtucket, Central Falls and Lincoln students. Mrs. Maloney said she does not support this lease.

Ms. Rue – Reading Coach at BFN – achieved AYP – great success – they accomplished this through the professionalism and dedication among the staff. She then referenced a study of 2,400 public and charter schools – 37% of the charter schools performed worse than the public schools – middle school students, charter vs. public – no difference. She mentioned that there was no NECAP data for Democracy Prep – so she said that data that does not exist should not be talked about. She thinks the morale at BFN is being chipped away at.

Ms. Gomes – She would like to see questions and dialogue take place for effective decisions to be made regarding the BVP lease. She believes the new superintendent needs to be involved in this decision. She mentioned Mrs. Sanzi's quote in the Valley Breeze about grown ups acting like grown ups and said she did not like it. She also asked Mr. Pedro to vote no on the BVP lease because he is the BFN representative and although she said he has not said anything regarding the lease, she is urging him to listen to all the families and vote no. She wants the BVP group to look elsewhere for space – let the other towns come forward. We need to utilize our schools for our own children. Ms. Gomes also mentioned that if there was any surplus money in a rainy day account, that it was raining now – use the money – BFN is making progress, they continue to make progress each year and it shows in their test scores!

Ms. Fernandes – she would like the SC to vote no to the BVP lease – she is very opposed to this lease situation.

Ms. Gagne – stated that all the rooms at BFN are being used - she believed that a lot of things would be messed up at the school if BVP were able to lease part of the building.

Larry P. – president of NEARI – he is concerned about programs, rooms, etc. if BVP leases BFN – he said the families and students are very concerned about this. He said that lots of corporate dollars go into the charter schools. BFN is doing very well, he urged the SC to keep in mind that the students at BFN are doing very well.

Patrick C. – told the SC that they could be looking at legal, ethical problems because dollars from BVP and Cumberland Public Schools will be paying for BFN – the state may have something to say about that – Cumberland could wind up with nothing – review R.I. Laws – funding formula needs to be thought of. He then talked about a school situation like this in New York and after four years the public school was asked to move out of the building – these situations usually do not end well. He told the SC that if they were listening to everyone, they would be voting no tonight.

Mr. Egan – he has been through many School Committee's, many superintendents – but the teachers, students and staff in Cumberland has always worked to the best of their ability. He noted that the SC represents Cumberland Public School students not the BVP students – the SC should do things to benefit the Cumberland Public Schools!

Chris N. – she believes that the Cumberland Schools should have Cumberland students in them. She would like to see the lines

changed to eliminate some of the over crowdedness in other schools in Cumberland. She believes this lease situation would impact our students negatively. Other concerns were BVP getting their foot in the door, extended learning day, after school programs, book fairs. She would like to see the BVP group go to another town. She thanked the staff at BFN, said they were very passionate about what they do.

Tracey P. – president of BFN PTO – she read several letters from the students at BFN – each letter expressed their concerns about the lease situation – the children were very concerned about the situation and made it very loud and clear in their letters. They mention being squished, wondered where certain teachers rooms would go to, and mentioned concerns about being bullied.

Brianna S. – thought that the lease would mess up everything – asked the SC to please keep the school the way it is now.

Mark – wanted to know why our SC was so concerned with helping BVP with their problems and wondered why BVP did not plan for the space that they needed? He recommended BVP investigating the other three towns involved.

Jennifer – concerned with things moving too fast – results are happening at BFN – good results. Her daughter has improved a great deal because of the Reading Street Program – she suggested starting with what we are doing right and build on that.

Mike – mentioned that BVP is looking for alternate space – many Valley Falls students go to BVP – no corporate dollars are going to BVP, but they do receive grants.

Agenda Item #9: Reports of Standing Committees

A. Payment of Bills – Mr. Wood noted that the Fiscal Management sub committee met earlier in the evening – he made a motion to pay invoices totaling \$1,806,622.53, 2nd Mr. Gibbons, approved 7-0.

Agenda Item #10: New Business

A. Discussion and/or vote to approve resolution: SC-R-2011-09: Year 3 of Sodexo Food Contract – Mr. Wood made a motion to approve, 2nd Mr. Gibbons, approved 7-0.

B. Discussion and/or vote to approve resolution: SC-R-2011-10: FY 2011 Budget Transfer – Mr. Wood made a motion to approve the budget as amended, 2nd Mrs. Beaulieu, approved 7-0.

C. Discussion and/or vote to approve resolution SC-PR-5-2011-07: Contract Award for Flooring in Computer Lab at Joseph L. McCourt Middle School – Mr. Wood made a motion to approve, not to exceed \$1,482, O’Sullivan’s of Quincy, Massachusetts, 2nd Mr. Pedro, approved 7-0.

D. Discussion and/or vote on Administrator Base Salary Schedule approved July 8, 2008 – Mr. Wood made a motion to approve (for 1 year), 2nd Mr. Gibbons and Mrs. Beaulieu, approved 6-1 – Mr. Pedro voted no.

E. Discussion and/or vote on Resolution SC-R-2011-02-A: CPS Administrator Salary Schedule approved October 14, 2010 – Mr. Wood made the motion that more research needs to be done on this and would like to move it out to July, 2012, 2nd Mr. Gibbons, approved

7-0.

F. Discussion and/or vote to approve contracts for: a)Assistant Superintendent b)Director of Administration c)Business Manager d)Director of Special Education e)Deputy Director of Special Education f)High School Principal g)Middle School Principals h)Elementary Principals i)High School Assistant Principals j)Middle School Assistant Principals k)Director of Information Technology l)Network Manager m)District Support Technician – Mr. Wood made a motion to table this for the next meeting, 2nd Mr. Pedro, approved 6-1, Mr. Gibbons voted no.

G. Discussion and/or vote on the Elementary Reorganization Plan – Mr. Mutter noted that this was in Special Programs for a long time, but the committee did vote (2-0) not to implement reorganization. Mr. Gibbons said his opinion is that before we lease out space to BVP, we need to think about this item further – 2/3 of BVP students are not Cumberland children, we need to look at our own overcrowdedness - our own children – top priority. Mr. Mutter said the sub committee rejected it because they felt they needed a full day K in the reorg plan and they did not get that so the plan was shot down. Mr. Mutter went on to say that the SC needs to do something and they need to get moving on it. Mr. Gibbons then noted that there are 71 children that opted to go to other schools because of Ashton and BFN not making AYP two years ago, but these children can come back to their neighborhood schools, what happens with these children because the district will not be bussing them next year – because Ashton and BFN made AYP. Mr. Gibbons made a motion to table this item, 2nd

Mr. Wood, failed 4-3. Mr. Wood then made a motion to accept the paired reorg plan from NESDEC, 2nd Mrs. Teel. Dr. Morelle read option #3 from the NESDEC review – Ashton Pre-School center, K, BFN Grades 1, 2 & 3, Garvin Grades 4 & 5, Community Grades 1, 2 & 3, Cumberland Hill Grades 4 & 5. Mr. Wood then asked if this gets shot down, will we address the overcrowded issue and when? Mrs. Teel said she supports the reorganization; she wants to know which scenario is the best to deliver academically. Mr. Gibbons said he is okay with redistricting, he said we have had overcrowding for years and it is time to change that. Mrs. Teel said she is not for redistricting; she wants a creative solution, what is the right appropriate configuration to deliver academically to the best of our ability. Mrs. Beaulieu said if we move the lines, it is not a significant savings, it might help overcrowding, it would not help academically. The dollars in the budget have not changed in four years; she will support the reorg if it improves academics. Mr. Mutter asked Dr. Morelle if the reorg paired schools of placing 1,2 and 3 in BFN would actually fit (it would be 470 students). Dr. Morelle said that when this was first presented, all the student enrollments would have worked at the time within the school boundaries, it would make a difference having the entire school and determining what goes where – it was determined by NESDEC that this could work. Dr. Morelle went on to say that the reorg dollars are not in the budget, and she agrees with Mr. Gibbons, there is still a space issue unresolved in the district-if the lease is approved, you still have a space issue – the facts presented about the lack of space in the building are not being

included in the discussion. Mr. Gibbons is concerned about families having to put two and three of their children on two and three different busses at different times, to different schools.

Mr. Woods motion to accept the reorg and Mrs. Teel's 2nd was voted on and the motion failed, 5-2, Mr. Wood and Mrs. Teel voted yes, everyone else, no.

H. Discussion and/or vote on School Lease Request from Blackstone Valley Prep

at B.F. Norton for the 2011-2012 School Year – Mr. Gibbons had several concerns – parking, not enough office space, could have 41 students coming back due to BFN making AYP, shared costs, technology, length of lease. Mr. Mutter told Mr. Gibbons that all of these concerns were answered in a memo, but Mr. Gibbons believed the answers were incomplete. Mr. Gibbons thanked the audience for their respect regarding this issue. Mr. Wood thought that the SC should listen to the public and to Administration, that this was not a good idea. He said they could find the dollars in the budget somewhere and not have to do this. Mr. Mutter mentioned that closing one school was another option, we could be looking at reductions to middle school sports, reduction in library staff, and there are multiple issues that will have to be addressed. Mr. Mutter also said that he understands that this is a difficult decision and a difficult time. He also noted at this time that he was not involved in a conference call that came up in the conversation tonight – Mrs. Sanzi was involved but only listened to the Gates Corporation conference call. Mrs. Beaulieu then said that if they removed the BVP request,

how would they make up the dollars. Mr. Wood then noted that he has spoken with Mr. Prignano and they could offset the budget by \$220,000 – Mrs. Beaulieu asked about the year after and Mr. Wood noted that BVP was only a one year lease anyway. Mr. Pedro then noted that he has spoken with Mrs. Maloney about the BVP situation and he has spoken to other communities and administrators, and he is here for the students and wants to do what is best for them. Mr. Gibbons then said that there has been lots of conversation about this lease; he would like to make the adjustments in the budget and not approve this lease. Mr. Prignano again noted that we do have surplus in the budget. Mr. Gibbons made a motion to deny the Blackstone Valley Prep lease request, 2nd Mr. Wood, approved 4-3. Mrs. Sanzi, Mrs. Teel and Mr. Mutter voted no. (The Yes votes DENIED the request) Prior to the vote being taken - Dr. Morelle noted that she would not support the lease, there is not enough space, it is not her recommendation at this time for the SC to move forward with this lease request. Dr. Morelle also noted that on more than one occasion the principal at BFN has told her that she does not support the BVP lease and that one of the main reasons is the lack of space and she went on to say that the Pre-K program is a wonderful program at BFN and they left Fatima because of sub standard classrooms. Mrs. Sanzi then asked Dr. Morelle again, about the number of children at BFN (if the reorg were ever to be approved), and Dr. Morelle stated that she realized that Mrs. Sanzi wanted her to say that the number was going to work (461 students going to BFN if the reorg happened), but she again repeated what she said earlier, there are classrooms available

(Mrs. Maloney has said how many that was) and that number does not match what BVP is seeking, it would only work if additional rooms were made available and that could only happen if they moved the preschool and again, the reason for moving the preschool to BFN was due to sub standard classrooms at Fatima – so it would make no sense to move back.

I. Discussion and/or vote on the FY 2012 Budget – Mr. Wood made a motion to

increase the fund balance by adding a revenue line item for \$220,000 and remove the line item for Democracy Prep, 2nd Mr. Gibbons for discussion- he would like to send this back to the finance committee so that they can make recommendations as to how to reflect this in the budget. Mr. Mutter interjected and said that because this budget has to get to the town this weekend, his suggestion would be to add the \$200,000 to the town contribution and remove the \$200,000 from the BVP line and Mr. Gibbons said he would be fine with that. So, the motion from Mr. Wood is to increase on the revenue side, the town contribution (whatever that number is) to \$220,000, remove the BVP item of \$220,000, which would keep all revenues and expenses at what they are (the existing number would not change), 2nd Mrs. Teel and Mrs. Sanzi, approved 7-0.

Agenda Item # 11: Personnel Recommendations

Dr. Morelle had the following recommendations:

Appointment

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the appointment of Kathryn Bonner, Girls' Softball Assistant Coach, at Cumberland High School, for the 2010-2011 school year, effective 5/13/2011. (Budgeted)

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the appointment of Matthew Smalley, Boys' Lacrosse Assistant Coach, at Cumberland High School, for the 2010-2011 school year, effective 5/13/2011. (Budgeted)

Mrs. Beaulieu made a motion to approve these appointments, 2nd Mr. Pedro, approved 7-0.

Agenda Item #12: Comments from the Public

Mr. C.- stated that he thought there was a lack of communication among the SC members – he thought that they sometimes do not have all of the facts.

Mr. K. – he commented on Mr. Gibbons comment about overcrowding – he said the community has accepted overcrowding over the years and they have come to embrace it.

Mr. Crowley – thanked the SC for the vote. He said that if the SC needed help from his office with this budget or future budgets, issues, etc. – he and his office would gladly help.

Another question was brought up by a member of the audience – wanted to know where we stood with reorganization – so Mr. Mutter said that everything would stay the same for the next school year. The SC will work on the issue – lots of data that need to be considered – no reorg this year(11-12), but there will be one for the year after. However, there will be walking distances that will change,

librarians will be reduced, walking distances added, classroom sizes will increase, but as far as where the students go to school, that will remain the same for 11-12. This parent also asked if anyone was hired to do grant writing and Mr. Mutter stated that this would be an administrative decision that will be taken up.

Agenda Item #13: School Committee Comments (School Liaison Reports)

Mr. Gibbons wanted to thank everyone tonight – thanked the parents and the public for their respect and thanked Mr. Mutter for keeping the meeting under control.

Mr. Pedro noted that we have lost some programs like home economics, industrial arts, but we need to get them back.

Mr. Mutter noted that some programs were cut and he too would like to see them brought back.

Agenda Item #14: Vote to go into Executive Session for Discussion on Items Referred to in R.I.G.L. 42-46-5:

A. Personnel Matters – Exception (1) and B. Negotiations/Litigation – Exception (2)

No executive session tonight.

Agenda Item #15: Adjournment

Mr. Pedro made a motion to adjourn, 2nd Mr. Gibbons, approved 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:16 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Linda A. Jackvony